



*Inspire Learning, Ignite Curiosity*

**Marlow C of E Infant School  
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy  
June 2026**

***Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness"***

***Genesis 1:26***

**Rationale**

At Marlow Church of England Infant School our curriculum vision is to inspire learning and ignite curiosity, within a welcoming Christian and spiritual community. We embrace the uniqueness of everybody and are inclusive of all. Our values of respect, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness and service guide all that we do, and our aim is for every child to feel nurtured, supported and safe.

Our belief is that every individual is created in God's image and therefore is precious and valuable. We believe in treating everybody with respect and dignity because we acknowledge everyone's God given value and unique identity.

This vision and belief links directly with one of the key themes in the Governor's strategic plan which focuses on promoting positive mental health for every member of our staff and the pupil body. The aim is that everyone will experience nurturing, caring, stability and trust to create a sense of belonging for both self & others. We pursue this aim using both a universal, whole school approach and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. Having a whole-school approach to well-being shows how the importance the governors and leadership of the school attribute to the health and wellbeing of their staff and pupils and the positive impact this will have on the overall effectiveness of the school. In turn this will help support the excellent quality of education that the school delivers.

We aim to achieve this by providing children with the opportunity to work towards achieving their full potential by:

- Embracing the uniqueness of everybody and be inclusive of all
- Empowering all to be enthusiastic learners
- Ensuring that every child feels nurtured, supported and safe
- Enriching learning through progressive teaching methods and technology
- Being responsible to and for society
- Being good citizens of the planet

As a school we support the rights of children and these rights are encompassed in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This policy focuses on helping to realise *Article 19: "All children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind"* and *Article 28: "All children have the right to a good quality education"*

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

## **Policy Statement**

*Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)*

## **Scope**

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's '*Supporting pupils with medical needs Policy*' in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## **Lead Members of Staff**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Mrs Sharon Reynolds and Mrs Sarah Downing - Designated Safeguarding Leads

Mrs Jackie Cousins - Designated Safeguarding Governor

Mr Barry Jennings – Wellbeing Governor

Mrs Sharon Reynolds - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Mrs Sharon Reynolds - CPD Lead

Mrs Sarah Downing - SENCO

Mrs Holly Madziwa – PHSE Lead

Mrs Sharon Reynolds, Mrs Sarah Downing, Mrs Hawkins, Mrs Higham and Mrs Madziwa and Mrs Snell - Staff Well-being committee

## **Pupil Mental Health & Wellbeing**

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENCO. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix I.

Advice and support available to school to support children and their families

There are a number of professionals available to schools that can support children's mental health/ At Marlow CE Infant School we can access advice and support from the following services.

- Our link Educational Psychologist
- CAMHS helpline /referral
- Educational Psychologist in the county Nurture and ELSA team
- Specialist school advice clinics such as ASD, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language, and Cognition and Learning

- County SEN team for advice
- EBSA (Emotional based School Avoidance) Team
- School Nursing Team

### **Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil (at an age appropriate level), the parents and relevant health professionals.

Care plans are drawn up when universal and in-class nurture support provided by the class teacher and teaching assistant has not had the desired impact for the child causing concern and the child continues to have needs in this area. Monitoring and review of in class nurture support will be carried out by the class teacher and at half termly progress meetings. If the concern continues, gets worse despite the additional in class support or if a diagnosis is made pertaining to a child's mental health, then a care plan will be drawn up.

This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

### **Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum and through the MindUp lessons that are delivered to every year group across the school.

The specific content of lessons will be tailored to the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

#### MindUp

- The MindUp curriculum provides pupils with social emotional learning
- It helps teachers create a classroom environment characterised by optimism, compassion and engagement, promoting resilience and fostering expressions of gratitude, empathy, and connection to others
- There are 15 lessons per year group which progress to meet the needs and the ages of the children as they move through the school
- It teaches the skills and knowledge children need to regulate their stress and emotion, form positive relationships, and act with kindness and compassion.

#### PHSE Association Guidance

We also follow the [PSHE Association Guidance](#) to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

At Marlow Church of England Infant School, the PSHE curriculum aims to support the children to develop their self-esteem and individuality. Through PSHE, we want the children to learn to understand themselves, their emotions and their uniqueness.

When our pupils move onto Year 3, PSHE will have helped them to identify the impact they have on others and the world around them and their place in society. They will have learned how to stay safe and healthy, build and maintain successful relationships and become active citizens, responsibly participating in society around them.

The themes and topics support social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and provide children with protective teaching on essential safeguarding issues, developing the knowledge of when and how children can ask for help.

*Relationships education and RSE must give pupils understanding, vocabulary and strategies they require to keep themselves safe and to thrive within good, stable long-term relationships of all kinds”*  
(Church of England Education Response)

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix II

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

### **Warning Signs**

All school staff have received training in mental health awareness and as a result they are likely to become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead.

### **Possible warning signs include**

Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Being particularly secretive
- Lateness to or absence from school (parents are struggling motivating the child to get ready or come to school)
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### **Managing disclosures**

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see Appendix III

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS. This record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Mental Health and Emotional Lead who will offer support and advice about next steps.

### **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. A mental wellbeing disclosure will be treated like a safeguarding in order to support the child in question. If we determine it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead and DSLs. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. The school will always give pupils the option either the school informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

### **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, a sensitive approach should be taken. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's difficulties and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

## **Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

## **Supporting Peers**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health difficulties, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health difficulties as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all teaching staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with our CPD lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## **Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing**

### **Rationale**

Marlow C of E Infant School places a high priority on maintaining the well-being of all employees. We recognise that people are our most precious resource and have put together this policy to ensure that employee well-being is regularly monitored and reviewed against the National Health and Safety standards.

### **Introduction**

The School as employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the School's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as “the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. There is an important distinction between ‘reasonable pressures’ which stimulate and motivate and ‘stress’ where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or students. The Health and Safety Executive have produced a number of Management Standards which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- Demands – i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- Control – i.e. how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- Support – i.e. the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- Relationships – i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Role – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- Change – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

## **Statement of Intent**

The Governors and the School's Leadership Team (SLT) acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote employee well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

The Governors and the School's SLT:

- are committed to fostering a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.
- recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

The Staff Well-being policy expands upon the School's Health and Safety policy, setting out how the School will promote the well-being of employees by:

- Creating a working environment where potential triggers of work-related stress are avoided, minimised or mitigated, as far as practicable, through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Increasing SLT and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing the competence of SLT so that they manage staff effectively and fairly.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the School.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby employees feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

## **Responsibilities for implementing the Staff Well-being policy**

The Governors, Headteacher and the School's SLT will:

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect within the School.
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within the School which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables employees to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements.
- Encourage staff to be fully involved in the decisions of the school through staff forums in which staff can talk freely about any issues which impact on their ability to carry out their jobs.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.
- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will not permit unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the School to promote well-being and more effective working.
- Act in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

Employees will:

- Treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity.
- Cooperate with the School's efforts to implement the Wellbeing policy, attending briefings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.

- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress,
- Referring them to the School's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.

Enable the School to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as: Sickness absence data, Staff turnover, exit interviews, number of referrals to Occupational Health, Numbers of grievance and harassment cases.

- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Well-being policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

The Well-being Leads will:

- Ensure that the Well-being policy is kept under review and updated as appropriate, under the remit of the Finance & People Committee of the Governing Body.
- Develop an institution level risk assessment based on the Health and Safety Executive's "Management Standards for Work-related Stress".
- Coordinate with the Headteacher to ensure that appropriate training is in place to support individuals
- Organise in conjunction with the staff, appropriate events and initiatives to promote health and well-being.
- Liaise with the staff on the development and implementation of the Well-being policy.

The Finance & People Committee of the Governing Body will:

- Determine the Well-being policy, and recommend its adoption by the school.
- Monitor the implementation of the Well-being policy and the operation of associated arrangements such as the staff counselling service.
- Review the policy every three years following feedback from staff surveys, SLT information provided by staff.
- Arrangements for implementing the Well-being policy
- Arrangements for well-being and stress prevention is made through good management practices.

These can include the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Promotion and reward procedures.
- Managing performance procedures
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Harassment and anti-bullying procedures.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the School and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements, and contact days with staff on maternity leave.
- An annual survey of staff to better understand the areas of work-life that have a negative effect on staff well-being.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Policy reviewed: June 2023 June 2026

Policy Review: June 2026 June 2029

## **Appendix I**

### **Referring to CAMHS**

#### **What is CAMHS?**

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and their aim is to help young people overcome emotional difficulties in their lives.

This guide to [Positive Mental Health](#) outlines what CAMHS does in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

#### **Making a referral**

Parents, professionals can refer or a young person can self-refer.

1. If there is a crisis surrounding a child's or young person's mental health and the life of child or young person is at immediate risk. phone 999.
2. If it's not a 999 emergency, you can dial 111 if you need help fast.
3. If you want to make a routine referral complete the online referral form [here](#)

For more information visit <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/>

## Appendix II

### Where to get help

#### **Action for Children**

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

Charity supporting children, young people and their families across England.

#### **Anxiety UK**

03444 775 774 (helpline)

07537 416 905 (text)

[www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Advice and support for people living with anxiety.

#### **Beat**

0808 801 0711 (youthline)

[www.beateatingdisorders.co.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.co.uk)

Under 18s helpline, webchat and online support groups for people with eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia.

#### **Buckinghamshire Mind**

260 Desborough Road

High Wycombe

Buckinghamshire

HP11 2QR

[www.bucksmind.org.uk](http://www.bucksmind.org.uk)

01494 463364

#### **Childline**

0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Support for children and young people in the UK, including a free 24-hour helpline.

#### **Hope Again**

0808 808 1677

[www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk)

Support for young people when someone dies.

#### **Hub of Hope**

[www.hubofhope.co.uk](http://www.hubofhope.co.uk)

A national database of mental health charities and organisations from across Britain who offer mental health advice and support.

#### **Mencap**

0808 808 1111

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

Information and advice for people with a learning disability, families and carers.

#### **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**

0800 800 5000

0800 1111 (18 or under)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Support for children and anyone worried about a child.

#### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Tel: 111

**Anna Freud Centre**

[www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)

0207 794 2313

Children's mental health charity

**YoungMinds**

0808 802 5544 (parents helpline)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Committed to improving the mental health of babies, children and young people, including support for parents and carers. Provides information on medication for young people.

## Appendix III

### Starting a mental health conversation

#### **Talking about mental health in class/group**

Make conversations about mental health a normal part of class discussion so that children feel increasingly comfortable about the topic.

- Focus your attention; make eye contact with children; really connect.
- Ask open questions to encourage children to think and give their opinions.
- Encourage respect for different views.
- Demonstrate empathy so that if children start to feel safe enough to talk about any struggles they may have, you are showing them how to respond.
- While you are having discussions, you have a perfect opportunity to increase their emotional vocabularies to help them explain how they are feeling.
- Keep an eye out for any children who might show signs that they are struggling with their mental health and talk to your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if you are worried.

#### **Talking about mental health with a child**

- Find an appropriate time and relaxed place to have a conversation with a child you might be concerned about.
- If a child discloses in class, offer empathy, invite them to talk in a safer, more private setting and talk to your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for advice about how the situation should be managed.
- If you invite a young person to tell you their personal issues, be clear what you will do with this information. Consider how you will respond if asked 'not to tell anyone'.
- The staff member involved should be familiar to the child whenever possible.
- Sit on a low chair if you can – so there is less height difference and you will be more approachable.
- Simply explain why you are there. For example, 'you said something interesting in circle time about how you felt when... How do you feel about it now?'
- Check with the child if there are other trusted adults (parents, the wider family, teachers) or friends they have talked to or could talk to.
- Listen carefully, be patient and friendly and give your full attention.
- Check your body language so that the child knows you are focusing on them.
- Take what they're saying seriously. Don't over-react but don't try to minimise or dismiss what they are saying. Ask open questions to encourage them to talk.
- Be calm and acknowledge their feelings.
- For young children drawing, modelling or playing with toys while the conversation is progressing can be helpful.
- Offer empathy and understanding rather than solutions. When a child receives empathy they begin to develop trust.
- Remember we are all different and children will respond in their own unique way to their experiences.
- Remember that children with SEND (special educational needs & disability) may struggle even more to articulate their feelings and thoughts and may need extra support. See this factsheet from [I CAN](#) which outlines techniques to help children with speech, language and communication needs and includes useful general guidance.

### **Talking about mental health with another member of staff**

If you think a colleague is showing some signs of early mental ill-health you should talk to them, find out what they may be struggling with in the workplace (which might include work pressures or relationships with colleagues), and what might help them.

You may want to encourage them to see their GP or look at ways to offer more support at school – perhaps through the Buckinghamshire Council employee assistance programme, or by talking to a charity such as the Education Support Partnership (who offer counselling and support to teachers). The important thing is that you use your empathy, communication and listening skills to make the staff member feel comfortable and able to be honest and open.

The Mental Health Foundation has eight useful tips on opening up a conversation about mental health:

- Set time aside with no distractions.
- Let them share as much or as little as they want to.
- Don't try to diagnose or second guess their feelings.
- Keep questions open-ended.
- Talk about wellbeing.
- Listen carefully to what they tell you.
- Offer them help in seeking professional support and provide information on ways to do this.
- Know your limits.

For more information visit <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>